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## EDITORIAL.

THE sensation of the past few months—  
attracting attention even amongst the  
general public—has been the Official  
Stamp case recently concluded. The  
continued leakage of Official stamps at  
last caused the Government to take drastic  
steps to stop it, with a very effectual result, at  
least for the present. It is a very unpleasant  
business all round, not only for the persons  
concerned but for the British philatelic world  
in general. Yet the evolution of the affair is  
simple enough. When the great officials of a  
Government office are known to take official  
stamps for the purpose of presentation to their  
stamp collecting friends naturally the smaller  
fry endeavour to obtain them likewise. At  
first some are allowed official permission to have  
specimens and then it gradually grows to  
substituting ordinary stamps for official ones  
without permission. This being no fraud but  
merely "a breach of confidence" the  
substituters expect that even if detected it will  
be condoned. Finally, since there are people  
willing to pay heavily for specimens, some less  
scrupulous officials effect the substitution on an  
ever increasing scale and are tempted to sell  
their ill gotten gains, till at last the substitutions  
even are effected by tricks which if not absolutely  
fraudulent are so closely allied thereto as  
to be indistinguishable, such as substitution by  
pieces of mutilated "specimen" stamps for  
the coveted articles—a practice to which the  
two culprits pleaded guilty at the recent trial.  
Then comes the penalty and terribly severe it  
was in the present case.

It seems to us that the matter should not now  
be left by the Government with the result  
attained. Sooner or later the leakage will  
begin again and like disastrous results will arise  
therefrom unless some method is adopted to  
prevent it. There are in our opinion only two  
remedies (1) to stop overprinting stamps for  
Government departments (2) if overprinting is

really necessary to sell such overprinted stamps  
to collectors at face value. It has been widely  
suggested that if the stamps were perforated  
with initials nobody would collect them. We  
cannot, however, agree with this suggestion.  
If the stamps are perforated there are sure to  
be some individuals who would want them.  
There are collectors of the rd. stamps perforated  
with firms' names of which we gave a lengthy  
list in recent numbers. Moreover, it is true  
that Messrs. Stanley Gibbons do not catalogue  
the stamp perforated with a crown and "B.T."  
used by the Board of Trade, yet they do  
catalogue and price a set of stamps for  
Luxemburg perforated with the word "Official"  
It appears therefore that the "perforated  
method" will be useless. We should much  
like to see all the official stamps abolished.  
They do not, to us at any rate, present any  
special interest and we could well spare them  
in view of the alarming quantity of new issues  
from all parts of the world. If this is  
impossible, the sale of them, at face value, at  
Somerset House would at any rate legitimize  
the possession of these in mint state by  
collectors and would knock the bottom out of  
the tall prices which are paid for them.

\* \* \* \* \*

If the authorities would go so far as to recognize  
philately by selling official stamps to collectors  
at face value we might perhaps venture to ask  
for a further boon on behalf of those interested  
in fiscal stamps. As far as we are aware  
Scotch and Irish fiscals cannot be purchased in  
London and there are various sets of English  
ones which the average collector does not know  
where to get. Could not all current fiscal  
stamps be sold at Somerset House? There are  
many who would appreciate this privilege.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the Fiscal Philatelic Society's list of India  
two varieties of the provisional Foreign Bill,  
12 as. on 12 rupees, 1901 issue, are catalogued,  
one with the word 2½ mm. from the bar through  
the value and the other with 4½ mm. between  
the two. Mr. Corfield sends us a photograph  
of similar variations in the 3as. on 8 rupees, in  
one case the distance between the word and the  
bar being 1½ mm. while in the other it is 2½ mm.  
This opens up the possibility of variations in the  
other values. Perhaps there was a London and  
a local print of the surcharge in every case.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have been favoured by a correspondent  
with the information that Revenue stamps for  
Guernsey will be issued this month. Hitherto  
Guernsey has been exempt from Stamp Duty of  
any kind but a Stamp Duty Act has been  
recently passed and will come into force on the  
29th inst. when the "Treasurer of the States"  
will issue stamps for the payment of the new  
duties.

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Messrs. C. Nissen & Co., of 77 High Holborn,  
London, W.C., inform us of their intention to  
publish in November, the first issue of a new  
yearly publication for Philatelists, to be known  
as "*The Stamp Collectors' Annual*." This new  
"Annual" will strive to become the  
"Whitaker" or the "Hazell" of our hobby.  
The price will be 1/-.